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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to begin the process of proposing a theory of multicultural counseling and therapy (MCT). Since such an attempt may be culturally biased in itself, an effort is made to minimize this danger by analyzing the weaknesses and culture- bound biases of traditional mental health practices, by reviewing the literature associated with factors identified as important in MCT and minority mental health, and by identifying guidelines or characteristics of a truly multicultural theory. Basic assumptions in a theory of MCT begin with the assumption that MCT is a metatheory of counseling and psychotherapy, one that recognizes that both counselor and client identities are embedded in multiple levels of experience and context. Cultural identity development is a major determinant of both counselor and client attitudes, which are also influenced by the dominant and subordinate relationships among groups. MCT is most likely enhanced when modalities and goals are consistent with the life experiences and cultural values of the client. MCT also stresses the importance of multiple helping roles of culturally different groups. MCT counselor competence involves the continual development of cultural sensitivities. (Contains 118 references.) (SLD)

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